



Al-Anbar Province, Iraq

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

MNFI COMMANDER VISITS CAMP RAMADI

by Capt. Alfred A. Smith

Gen. George Casey, Commander of Multi National Forces in Iraq visited Camp Ramadi on November 24 and enjoyed a Thanksgiving meal with the Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and Sailors of the 2/28 BCT.



Gen. Casey greets Spc. Daniel Haagen, prior to enjoying a Thanksgiving meal with Pfc. Glodgett, Corpsman 2nd Class John Morrison and other Great Americans at camp Ramadi.
Photo by Spc. Sam Kerschner



Maj. Ros Gammon 2/28 BCT Brigade S-3 gives Gen. Casey a brief overview of the current operations in Ramadi.

Photo by Spc. Sam Kerschner

The menu at Camp Ramadi consisted of turkey, ham, chicken, steak, lobster, crab legs, and shrimp. Side dishes included sweet potatoes, stuffing, macaroni and cheese, collard greens and corn on the cob. If that wasn't enough, there was ice cream, pumpkin, sweet potato, cherry and apple pie.

"You have probably the biggest challenge in Iraq in terms of creating a secure environment," said Gen. Casey. He promised the 2/28 BCT that help is on the way, in the form of rapidly deploying new divisions of the Iraqi Army to the Al Anbar Province.

Gen. Casey also commented on the great progress being made in Ramadi by the Iron Soldiers of the 2/28 BCT.

The Iron Soldiers of the 2/28 BCT thank Gen. George Casey for making our first Thanksgiving in Iraq a very special one.

MOTO MAIL IS HERE!

Don't have regular access to a computer to check your e-mail? Tired of waiting weeks to receive regular letter mail thru the US Postal Service? Moto-mail may be the answer for you!

Moto-mail is a web based system of electronic/hardcopy mail used by the Marine Corps for units deployed to Iraq and Kuwait, but the service has been expanded to include units of the 2/28th BCT. With this system your friends and family can log-on to the Moto-mail web site, type a letter to you, and it will then be delivered to you in a matter of days. No waiting a week or two for regular mail and unlike e-mail, you will have a physical reminder of your loved ones that you can read and re-read at you leisure.

Steps for Sender to Use Moto-Mail

Log onto www.motomail.us

Step 1: Enter Security Verification Code

Enter E-mail Address or Create free Yahoo e-mail

Step 2: Read Terms/Disclaimer and hit 'Accept' button

Step 3: Select Country of Residence

Step 4: Complete Sender Information (i.e. name, address, login and password)

Step 5: Add recipients to address

By Sgt. 1st Class Barbra Mays

book (at this step there are only Marine units listed).

Go to the Main page and then hit 'Add Address' button)

Step 6: Select Service – select Army Unit

Step 7: Select Unit (zip code may not match actual mailing zip code)

After the initial set up, it is just two quick steps to typing a letter. There is also an option for downloading 'Quick Letter Writer' which allows the sender to type a letter offline then they only have to log-on for a few minutes to send the letter. After the letter is typed, it is sent to the server in TQ where it is printed, sealed and forwarded to you thru the normal in theater mail system. The letter is printed and sealed all in one process and no one ever reads the content of the mail before you receive it.



Inside this issue:

Insurgents Bust Against B/1-104 Cav	3
TF 2-69 Captures Insurgent Leader	4
2-222 FA Takes Maintenance Seriously	5
A Step Towards the Future	6
Always Something New	7
Iron Soldiers in Action	8 to 11
EOD - Heroes on The Battlefield	12
But For Freedom For All	14
2nd BCT Vehicles are Ready	15
We Miss You Over The Holidays This Year	16

MAILING ADDRESSES FOR :

Ar-Ramadi
Soldiers Name
Soldiers Unit
Camp Ar-Ramadi
APO, AE 09362-9997

Habbaniyah / Taqaddum
Soldiers Name
Soldiers Unit
Camp Taqaddum
APO, AE 09381

Al Asad
Soldiers Name
Soldiers Unit
Camp Al Asad
APO, AE 09333

Please take into consideration, when mailing perishables: mail could take up to two weeks to reach Soldiers.

INSURGENTS BUST AGAINST B/1-104 CAVALRY

By Capt. Gregory C. Knight

On November 1, 2005, 1st Lt. Scott Stanford and his platoon, assigned to B/1-104CAV (Blackjack), Task Force 1-172AR, started their shift determined to make something happen in their area of operations. It had been a frustrating couple of months patrolling main supply routes with his platoon. There were small actions – a weapons cache, a few detainees sent to Abu Ghraib for insurgent activity – but they all knew more was going on than what they were finding. Even though performing patrols on the route meant long hours outside the wire, the platoon members always fought for a seat on the mission. With more members in the platoon than there were seats in the patrol, someone had to take a day off.

As dusk began to fall, Lt. Stanford figured that the time was right to check the highway, knowing the traffic patterns and likely times for insurgents to travel

sible for emplacing improvised explosive devices (IED's) in and around the city. After the capture of his brother, Mohamed Daham Abed Al-Julibawi, earlier this year, Issa Daham became the de-facto leader of the insurgent group.

1st Lt. Scott Stanford's intuition was correct, with Issa Daham being one of two key insurgent leaders in the Ramadi area taken off the street by his platoon during a three day time period.

The other key insurgent removed from the streets of Ramadi by Soldiers of Bravo Troop 1-104th Cavalry was Hatim Asfur Asef.

On November 2, Hatim Asfur Asef and two other individuals were detained when the patrol identified a suspicious vehicle and stopped it to investigate. Upon investigation of the vehicle,

the patrol confiscated several weapons; numerous magazines loaded with ammunition and false ID cards.

Hatim Asfur Asef was being held for illegal weapons possession at a local detention center until his true identity was confirmed.

Hatim Asfur Asef is also part of an insurgent network in Ramadi that is involved in similar atrocities as those linked to Issa Daham Abed Al-Julibawi.

The capture of Hatim Asfur Asef marked the third high value target captured by the 2nd Brigade Combat Team Iron Soldiers during the month of November.

Task Force 1-172AR Command is happy to report that there were no casualties or damages to equipment during the capture of this high level insurgent leader.

That's the way it goes here, with the fight against the insurgency continuing at the platoon and squad level. 1st Lt. Stanford and his platoon are back out on the highway, looking to do it again.



1st Lt. Scott Stanford, of Burlington, Vt. who is a member of the 104th Cav. Staff Sgt. Jose Pequeno, of Lizbin, New Hampshire who is part of the 237th MP Company and attached to the 104th Cav. were instrumental in the capture of the two high profile insurgents.

Photo by Spc. Sam Kerschner

Stanford had been watching activity in his area of operations, and knew that one of the main routes was sparsely patrolled. Numerous improvised explosive devices (IEDs) had been detonated and it was watched by the insurgent triggermen in vehicles. These insurgents trigger IEDs on military convoys and patrols, and flee before they are interdicted by responding forces. The platoon, being extremely familiar with the surroundings after four months in the area, and were looking to detain or kill these terrorist.

through the area emplacing IEDs. Coordinating with his sister unit, he moved his patrol onto the Highway, traveling East, on the look out for any suspicious vehicles. At about 1700, Stanford and his patrol identified a dark Opel sedan traveling East on the highway. It just didn't look right. The vehicle had three military age Iraqi males that were watching the patrol, and acting in a manner that indicated to 1st Lt. Stanford that they were up to no good. The patrol maneuvered and waved the vehicle to the shoulder of the road, and had the three men exit their vehicle. As the patrol searched the vehicle, they discovered a rocket launcher tube. The patrol quickly detained the suspected insurgents, confiscated the weapons and vehicle, and transported the detainees to Camp Ramadi.

One of the detainees, initially using a false name at the Camp Ramadi Detention Center, was identified by one of the other insurgents as Issa Daham Abed Al-Julibawi. Al-Julibawi was the head of an insurgent network in Ramadi that involved kidnapping, extortion, and counterfeiting passports. He was also respon-



Issa Daham Abed Al-Julibawi (left) and Hatim Asfur Asef (right), are high level insurgent leaders that were detained by 2/28 BCT Soldiers from B/104 Cav. Task Force Saber 1-172 AR while conducting combat patrols in Western Ramadi.

TF 2-69 CAPTURES INSURGENT LEADER

by Capt. Charles Cannon

AR RAMADI, Iraq – Throughout the first and second week of the month of November, if someone happened to “google” current breaking news reports in the volatile city of Ramadi, Iraq, they likely would have come across the following headline: *Insurgent leader captured in eastern Ramadi*. After clicking on the headline, this following official press release appeared:

“**AR RAMADI, Iraq** – 2BCT Soldiers from Task Force 2-69 Armor captured a high-level insurgent leader while conducting combat patrols in eastern Ramadi, early Saturday morning.

Majid Adnon Swedowi, also known as Abu Omar, and five other individuals were captured when the patrol conducted a hasty cordon and search on a suspected home harboring the insurgent leader.

Majid Adnon Swedowi was the head of an insurgent network in Ramadi that conducted complex attacks against Coalition Forces which included emplacing improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in and around the city. He was also involved in kidnappings and the extortion of Iraqi Citizens.

This operation was successful due to the local citizens of Ramadi, resiliently hoping to rid their often violent city of terrorist leaders and insurgent cells.

“Great teamwork throughout the 2nd BCT led to this successful raid. Capt. Roy Bolar and his ‘Dealer’ Company did a great job executing this mission on such a short notice. Intelligence driven operations continue to degrade the enemy’s ability to disrupt the democratic process here in Ar Ramadi.” (Lt. Col. Robert R. Roggeman, Mishawaka, IN)

He is the second high level insurgent leader captured by the 2nd Brigade Combat Team in the past week; Issa Daham Abed Al-Julilbawi was captured on Tuesday, November 1st in Western Ramadi.

Majid Adnon Swedowi remains in the custody of Coalition Forces.

There were no casualties or damages to equipment during the capture of this high level insurgent leader.

Thanks to timely intelligence TF 2-69 was able to come up with a quick and effective plan to capture one of the most wanted terrorist and insurgent leaders in the capital city of the Al Anbar Province.

The plan called for TF 2-69’s Dealer Company, which has recently enjoyed great successes in the target area in Eastern Ramadi; to conduct a raid on the target house, situated in an area known throughout Ramadi for its perpetual anti-Coalition messages.

Upon arrival at the target house, Dealer Company executed a well planned raid, however the inhabitants of the house did not meet the description of Majid Adnon Swedowi AKA Abu Omar. Target missed.

Capt. Bolar then re-consolidated his troops, and conducted a raid on a house adjacent to the initial target building, thinking that a simple miscalculation of the original information may have been the culprit in the unsuccessful raid of the first building. He was right.

Upon entry of the second house, elements of Dealer Company observed eight individuals of varying ages and gender. Once separated by gender, Soldiers began questioning the individual male occupants of the house. After hearing several conflicting stories and reports of the whereabouts of Mr. Swedoni, Capt. Bolar suspected that the military aged men were all giving untruthful accounts about the location of the main target.

Once again, Capt. Bolar re-consolidated his forces and conducted yet another raid, this time hitting the nail on the head. Inside, dressed and ap-



Capt. Roy Bolar of Able Company, 2-69 Armor
Photo by Capt. Chas Cannon

parently preparing to leave, was Mr. Swedoni along with one of his trusted assistants. It appeared he had been notified of Coalition Forces in the area and was hurriedly planning his escape. Unfortunately for him, Dealer Company had other, more restrictive, plans in mind. Both men were immediately detained and returned to a nearby holding facility in order to be processed.

After two rather unsuccessful raids, elements of TF 2-69 had finally hit the jackpot and captured the leader of a deadly insurgent network that, in the recent past, has conducted complex attacks against Coalition Forces.

This operation was successful due to the local citizens of Ramadi, resiliently hoping to rid their often violent city of terrorist leaders and insurgent cells.

With their continued assistance, TF 2-69, along with other Coalition Forces operating in Ramadi, hope to rid the Al Anbar Province’s most ferocious city of any and all insurgent activity.

Capturing Majid Adnon Swedowi came at an opportune time for the citizens of Ramadi.

2-222 FA TAKES MAINTENANCE SERIOUSLY by Capt. Jethro Spencer

Why all the pride and hard work? Because we are the Triple Deuce Maintenance Team. We want our Soldiers to drive the safest and most dependable vehicles available when they go outside the wire on missions that may put their lives in danger. We want the vehicles to do what they are intended to do: Get the

Soldier the heck out of danger!

All of the mechanics of this maintenance team deserve a big pat on the back for the great job they do each and every day. Their hard work and dedication are greatly appreciated. There are some really outstanding maintenance leaders who deserve to be recognized

for their exceptional contributions to this effort: Staff Sgt. Louis Capasso, Sgt. Nickolas Blakham, Staff Sgt. David Roberts, Staff Sgt. David Owens, Staff Sgt. Garth Draper, Sgt. Nathan Osborn, and Sgt. Benjamin Lenford just to name a few.



Front Row L-R; Sgt First Class Bobby Davis, Spec. Anastasiya Sulim, Spec Adam Kuntz, Sgt Christner, Sgt. Courtney Allen, Staff Sgt. Cory Huff, (Hidden), Staff Sgt. John Sheets, Sgt Jeff Huseby, Sgt. Nathan Osborne, Sgt. Ben Lenford, Staff Sgt. Leonard Goodson, Sgt First Class Kyle Gibson, Sgt. Robert Davis, Spec Jamison Jeweks (behind sign), Spec. Steven Gale, Staff Sgt. Dave Roberts, Sgt. Melissa Johnson, Master Sgt. Eric Greenhalgh. Kneeling- L-R; Staff Sgt. Louie Capasso, Sgt Nick Blackham, CW2 Randy Frehner, Sgt. Ortiz. Sitting on equipment L-R; Sgt. Tyler Davis, Spec. Joshua Stringham, Sgt. Kiley Erye, Sgt. Garth Draper, Sgt. Gary Stokes, Unknown. Standing on equipment L-R; Cpl. Mike Bloomquist, Spec Billy Fullmer, Sgt. Mat Willden, Sgt William Lister, Staff Sgt. David Owens, Spec Zackarie Sampson, Staff Sgt. Rulan Snow.

THANKS DFAC STAFF!!!
For the wonderful Thanksgiving meals.



Col. Regis Cardiff and CSM Horace Pysher stopped to thank MSG Laverne Campbell and the DFAC Staff, for the Thanksgiving meals. To the left is the Night shift, and the Day shift to the right.

A STEP TOWARDS THE FUTURE

by Sgt. Charity Lewis

Ramadi-November 23, 2005 has been officially signed into the history books. Al Anbar Province Governor Ma'Moun Sami Rasheed met with the Ramadi Regional Water Director, representing the Director General of Water for Al Anbar to sign a contract authorizing the start to five Water Treatment Facilities for the Province.

Marines from the 6th Civil Affairs Group and Soldiers of the 2 BCT were also present.

The project will total over \$2.6 million dollars. It is the largest reconstruction project in the Province.

Major Sean W. Tubbs 2/28 BCT Civil Affairs officer said "an estimated number of 100,000 people will be affected. This project will make an immediate positive impact in upgrading the current water treatment capabilities in the city of Ramadi.

This is only one of many larger scale infrastructure projects that are planned to occur in the next few months in the area".

"Words would not and could not express my true feelings toward coalition forces..."

The project officially began in June 2005, and by August the bids were opened to the public by members of the 5th Civil Affairs Group, who have since completed their tour in Iraq.

Villages were assessed and prioritized; those in the most need of water will soon be receiving access to clean water through communal taps.

Two villages in Ar Ramadi, as well as one in Habbiniyah, Haditha, and Hit will be receiving the water systems.

Governor Ma'Moun greeted Coalition Forces representatives by saying, "First of all I would like to welcome all of you, and secondly words would not and could not express my true feelings toward coalition forces, especially General Williams and the people from the state department, and for the financial support they



Governor of Al Anbar Province Ma'Moun Sami Rasheed, signs the Water Treatment Facilities contract.

Photo by Capt. Alfred A. Smith

give to me to develop my programs.

I really appreciate it and I am grateful. And I pray to god to reward you beautifully in this life and here after. And I hope we to continue the support and the spirit of cooperation.

Today we reap our fruits for which we have worked so hard, today we achieve our tremendous goal."

He has hopes that the projects will be completed in approximately 4 months.

Brigadier General James Williams, Deputy Commanding General of the 2nd Marine Division at Camp Blue Diamond Iraq, stated "this is the first step to great success.

Obviously this will be of benefit to the people of Al Anbar Province. As everybody knows, water is basically the essence of life. This will be fresh water, and that will go a long way."

Williams also congratulated the CAG for all their efforts. The group will continue to work towards great success in the future.

The Governor stated that the courage that drives him to do this job, despite the dangers, is that he loves his job, his country, and his people, and he is putting his life on the line in order to save them.

ALWAYS SOMETHING NEW By Capt. Herbert Nash

Without a doubt, one of the first things that Soldiers of the 2/28 Brigade Combat Team noticed upon mobilization to Al Anbar Province, Iraq was the feeling that, somehow, things would not look like the war they had expected. No deciduous forests; no advancing mechanized battalions; and, in many cases, not even a job that looked like the one they had signed up for back in the States.

This was certainly true recently at the 876th Engineer Battalion observation posts, or OPs, that dot a main supply route in the area. Manned by Soldiers of many military specialties, improvements in the sites were also emplaced by soldiers who had never performed these tasks.

The highlight of the force protection improvement recently emplaced was approximately one kilometer of "triple standard concertina" fencing. Made of three separate lines of coiled razor wire, the fence is difficult to penetrate without significant effort, and is normally emplaced by combat engineers. In this environment, though, everyone pitched in, learning the subtle hints and doctrinal requirements of the job.

Spc. Scott Haslett, a heavy equip-

ment operator from Johnstown, PA, and Spc. Brian Connors, a light construction equipment operator from Pittsburgh, PA, were two of the Soldiers involved in the event. Neither has had much experience with such tasks until this deployment, when such cross-training became the norm for many. Spc Nicole Ellis, a mechanic from Philadelphia, had never learned combat engineering tasks before. "Hey," Ellis said with resignation, sweating in full body armor, weapon slung on her back, "it has to be done."

Completing the work crew were three

other mechanics, one communications specialist, and a cook, supervised by several combat engineer sergeants, including Sgt. 1st Class Arthur Toven. "It'll keep them out, just like it's supposed to," according to Toven, pleased with the results.

This is certainly not the last time that troops will be working outside their 'normal' jobs; in this setting, though, it is this experience itself that has turned out to be the norm.



Spc. Nicole Ellis, a mechanic from Philadelphia, PA, and Spc. Scott Haslett of Johnstown, PA, learn to install triple standard concertina fencing from Sgt. 1st Class Arthur Toven, a combat engineer with the 876th Engineer Battalion.

RHODE ISLAND FLAG FLIES OVER CAMP RAMADI by Capt. Brian Thornton

Since our departure from Rhode Island in January 2005 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, I have carried with me, as the 861st Engineers Commander, an official state Flag.

It has accompanied us to Camp Shelby, MS; then to the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, CA; on to Camp Buehring, Kuwait; and finally to Camp Ar Ramadi, Iraq.

It has not, until today, 05 November 2005, been flown on a flagpole. It has been displayed in our tents, orderly rooms, and offices, but it has not FLOWN!

With the help of Sgt. 1st Class Claude Hines, the flag was raised to just below the level of Old Glory, due to the fact that the State flag appeared to be just a little bit bigger.

Says SFC Hines, "I'm no expert on flag etiquette or anything, but I know the

American flag is flown on the right (facing out from a building), and is either the biggest flag, or flies higher than the other(s)."

The State Motto, "HOPE", is now officially flying in Iraq.



2ND BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM IRON SOLDIERS IN ACTION



Iron Soldiers wait for extraction from an operation just outside of Ramadi.
Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Rich Scaricaciottoli



3-7 Marines inspect an RPG captured during a recent raid in Ramadi.
Photo by Spc. Samantha Kerschner



(L-R) Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery Marks of Burlington Vt, Sgt. Omar Harris of Langhorne, Pa. and 1st Lt. Joseph Kelleher of Philadelphia, Pa. discuss their next move during an operation in Ramadi. All Soldiers are with Charlie Co. 1-172nd Armor.
Photo by Sgt 1st Class Rich Scaricaciottoli



Capt. Chris Sedtal and Spc. Maria Cardenas set up a makeshift finance office at Camp Corregidor.
Photo by Sgt 1st Class Rich Scaricaciottoli

Send your pics to SFC Scary (Richard.Scaricaciottoli@us.army.mil) Include a brief description and who took the pic.



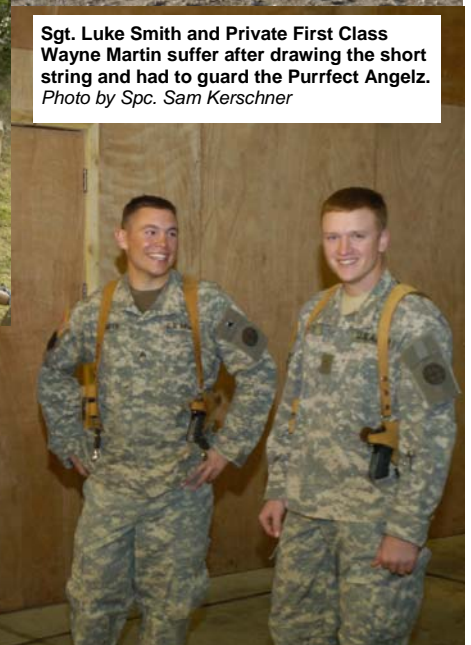
An Iron Soldier uses Night Optics to look over an area just outside of the Glass Factory.
Photo by Sgt 1st Class Rich Scaricaciottoli



Private First Class Hillary Sweeney of Waynsburg, Pa. learns how to fire an AK-47 rifle.
Photo by Sgt 1st Class Rich Scaricaciottoli



An Iraqi Soldier hands a toy to a young boy while on patrol.
Photo by Sgt 1st Class Rich Scaricaciottoli



Sgt. Luke Smith and Private First Class Wayne Martin suffer after drawing the short string and had to guard the Purrfect Angelz.
Photo by Spc. Sam Kerschner



An AH-64 Apache and UH-60 Blackhawk fly over Camp Ramadi
Photo by Spc. Sam Kerschner

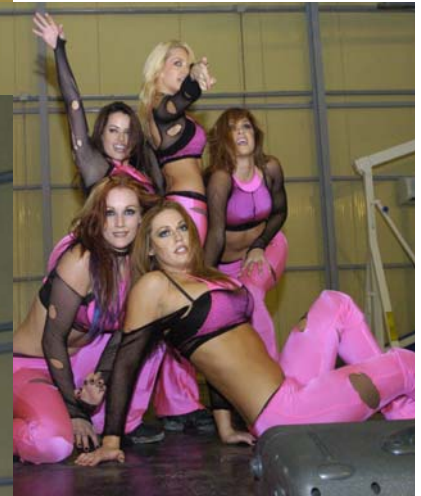


Task Force Saber descends onto Ramadi during operation Lions as local kids watch and wave.
Photo by Sgt 1st Class Rich Scaricaciottoli

PURRFECT ANGELZ

On November 15th a traveling USO show who call themselves the Purrrfect Angelz came to Camp Ramadi and gave the troops a small break from the war. The girls were all former Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders who danced and sang for almost 2 hours. The girls also waited and signed autographs for every soldier that wanted one.

Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Rich Scaricaciottoli and Spc. Sam Kerschner



Send your pics to SFC Scary (Richard.Scaricaciottoli@us.army.mil) Include a brief description and who took the pic.

THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving was a special treat for the Iron Soldiers. Though nothing can make up for being away from loved ones during the holidays, the company of close friends and comrades along with an impressive amount of food helped. The tradition of Officers and Senior enlisted serving the junior soldiers was also enjoyed by all.

Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Rich Scariaciottoli and Spc. Sam Kerschner



EOD - HEROES ON THE BATTLEFIELD

by Master Sgt. Higgins - USMC

"The Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) mission is to provide a capability to neutralize the hazards associated with explosive ordnance that are beyond the capabilities of other specialties, and eliminate all threats to operations, installations, personnel, and material..."

The statement above is the textbook version of the EOD Mission. What does the Marine EOD team provide the 1st of the 110th Infantry Task Force at Habbaniyah?

Foremost, rendering safe and/or disposal of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) in the 110th's battle space. This is EOD's primary focus in this operation. Our goal is to save as many lives as possible by mitigating the threat posed by

IEDs and Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs). Second, Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) clearance. EOD is responsible for locating and clearing any unexploded ordnance that poses a threat to operations, facilities or personnel. The EOD team also conducts Post Blast investigations.

When the unfortunate occurrence of an IED detonation does take place, EOD provides the Commander the ability to determine what explosive materials were present and the components used to initiate the attack. EOD may also be used to determine the types of weapons or ordnance used in indirect fire attacks. EOD also assists in cache clearances. When an enemy weapons cache is located, EOD will identify the weapons and ordnance materials present and give guidance on the threats posed by them. In addition, our personnel will safely dispose of the items, ensuring that they cannot be used by the enemy. Moreover, exploitation/intelligence gathering is the responsibility of EOD.

EOD provides the Command with the ability to gather technical intelligence on IEDs and the tactics used to emplace, manufacture, or initiate them. This also extends to conventional and unconventional ordnance items. Marine Corps EOD is the only military entity authorized to disassemble and render

inert ordnance materials.

The above missions are accomplished by three EOD Marines: MSgt Higgins, Sgt Licon, and Sgt Ownbey. We are assisted by the dedicated soldiers of the 1-110th that escort us to and from the incident sites. These soldiers provide the EOD team with the necessary security to complete each mission.

The team was ably led by GySgt Darrell Boatman until he was wounded on 02 November.

GySgt Boatman died of his wounds on 04 November. He was a twenty-year veteran of the Marine Corps, spending thirteen of those years in the Explosive Ordnance Disposal field. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and his many friends. We dedicate ourselves to upholding the values and competency that he embodied. Semper Fidelis!



The Marine EOD missions at Camp Habbaniyah are carried out by (left to right) Sgt. Ownbey, MSG Higgins and Sgt. Licon.



A 20 year veteran of the Marine Corps, GySgt Darrel Boatman was a key component to the EOD team at Camp Habbaniyah and will never be forgotten.

LARGEST FIND YET

Continued from cover.

“It was not technology that uncovered this huge cache site; it was an American Soldier. A typical American Soldier who was alert, aggressive, and displayed initiative.”

they were in the middle of a weapons cache.

Sgt Traister radioed in the information to 1st Lt. Scott Williamson of Scranton, the 4th Platoon Leader – “There’s all kinds of stuff down here.” It started to look like this was a big find for the unit.

The cache was found across an area several soccer fields in length. The weapons and ammunition were hidden in low banks of dirt, under brush piles, and in the foundation of an unfinished house. An Explosives Ordnance Disposal (EOD) technician and one 5 ton Medium Military Tactical Vehicle was sent to assist in recovering the ordnance and weapons.

As the day went on with more and more weaponry coming out of the ground, the unit finished loading the truck with what they had discovered so far and started planning to return the next day to finish the job. It was already a successful day for the Platoon, hauling away hundreds of artillery and mortar rounds, mortar tubes and even one surface to air missile.

As the work continued the following day, the platoon and EOD technicians continued to find ordnance and weapons systems. An additional two truckloads later, the Platoon was exhausted, dirty, and extremely proud of their efforts.

An EOD technician said the discovery of the cache site was “consistent with the type of IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices) we find in the area” and would make a difference locally. The EOD technician said “I would rather find it in a buried 30 gallon plastic barrel than in a shot hole”, referring to the term used for IED emplacements.

IEDs are a primary means of attack-

ing Coalition Forces in the area. At the end of recovery operations, the total count of items found was impressive. 358 various artillery, mortar, rocket propelled grenades and rocket rounds, thousands of rounds of small arms, 7 antipersonnel mines, numerous electronic IED initiation devices, 21 pounds of plastic explosive, five mortar tubes, one antiaircraft machine gun, hundreds of fuses, night vision devices, detonation cord, several AK47s and other rifles, black ski masks, a homemade Bangalore torpedo, and even a bazooka round from WWII.

Lt. Col. Mark Lovejoy, Commander of TF Saber 1-172 AR and Colonel John Gronski were on site for some of the recovery operations. They noted the great efforts of the Soldiers of B/1-109IN. “It was not technology that uncovered this huge cache site; it was an American Soldier. A typical American Soldier who was alert, aggressive, and displayed initiative. Sgt. Brian Packer, a member of B-109th from Williamsport, Pa., is one of many outstanding Soldiers and Marines who are part of the Iron Brigade and 2nd Marine Division,” Gronski said.

The Soldiers responsible for finding the initial site were typically understated about the discovery. “We want to get this one behind us and find more. That’s our attitude,” Traister said. He and Packer said they were thinking about Gunnery Sgt. Boatman, an EOD technician they worked closely with while assigned to the 1-110 IN at Camp Hab-



(Above) Lt. Scott Williamson and Sgt. Brian Packer pose in front of the largest cache found to date, by the Iron Soldiers.
Photo by Sgt. 1st. Class Rich Scariaciottoli

baniyah; Gunnery Sgt. Boatman was recently killed defending his country.

“We were all thinking of Gunny Boatman and how proud he would be of us,” said 1st Lt. Williamson. “I am proud of my boys. It’s the tenacity of these guys to bring the fight to the enemy and to stay alert – that’s what led to this find. They do this day in and day out,” Williamson said.

It is hard to figure the number of lives that may have been saved by the discovery of this insurgent weapons cache. What is certain is that the Soldiers of B/1-109IN have prevented an untold number of IED and mortar attacks, making Ramadi a safer place for the Iraqi citizens, the Iraqi Security Forces, and the Coalition Forces working to keep them safe.

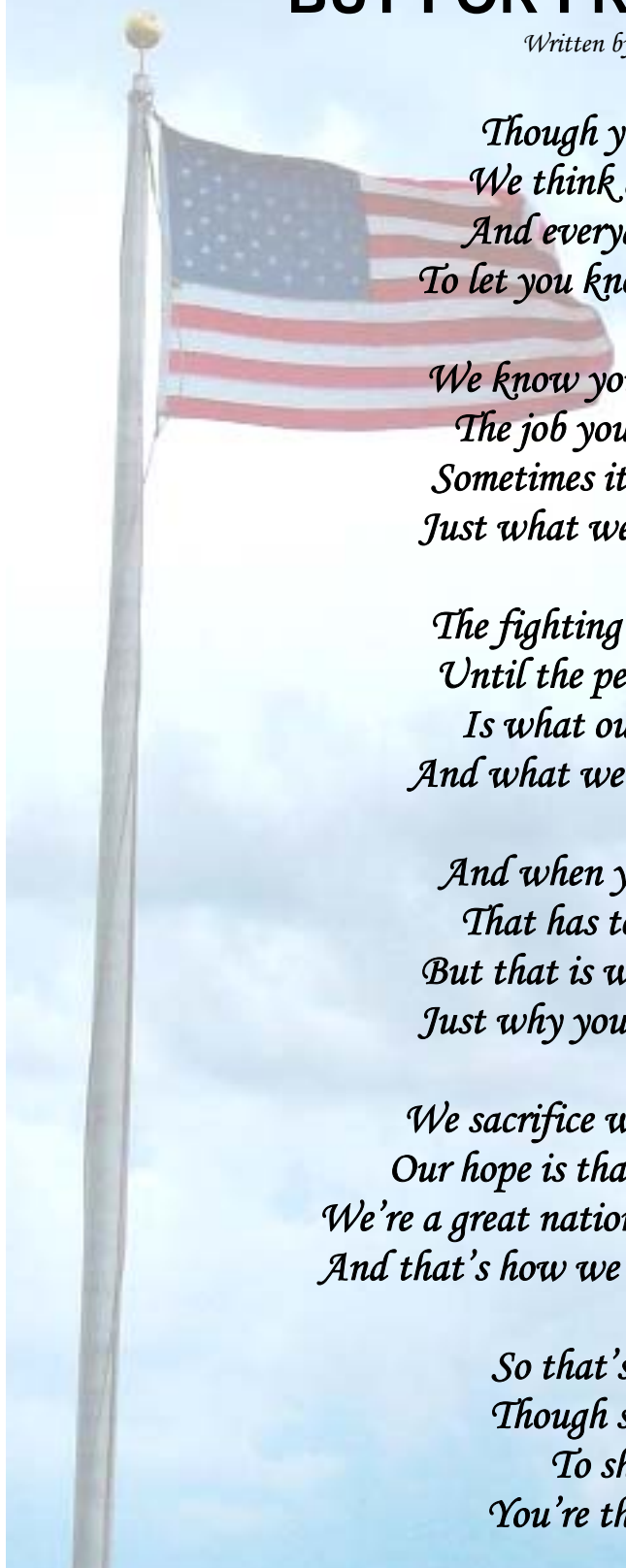


Just a small section of the cache area that spanned over 500 Meters.
Photos by Sgt. 1st. Class Rich Scariaciottoli

Express Yourself

BUT FOR FREEDOM FOR ALL

Written by a friend to the Brigade



*Though you are so far away
We think about you everyday
And everyday we say a prayer
To let you know how much we care.*

*We know your lives are on the line
The job you're doing is just fine
Sometimes it's hard to understand
Just what we're doing in that land.*

*The fighting there will never cease
Until the people know that peace
Is what our lives are all about
And what we want without a doubt*

*And when you see a comrade fall
That has to be the worst of all
But that is when you need to know
Just why you're there, so on you go.*

*We sacrifice women, we sacrifice men
Our hope is that we'll be together again
We're a great nation, we're proud and we're free
And that's how we'd like the whole world to be.*

*So that's why you're there
Though sometimes you fall
To show the world
You're the best of them all.*

SEE AND READ THE IRON SOLDIER IN VIVID COLOR AT <http://ironsoldiers.army.mil>

2/28 BCT COMBAT VEHICLES ARE READY by Marine Sgt. Ryan S. Scranton

CAMP RAMADI, RAMADI, Iraq – When First Lieutenant Jeremy M. Coleman arrived in Iraq he had no idea the responsibility that would be placed firmly upon the shoulders of himself and his maintenance team.

As the maintenance officer for the 2/28 Brigade Combat Team, the 32-year-old, Carlisle, PA native, is in charge of more than 1,000 troops working to improve and maintain hundreds of combat vehicles, transport trucks, and earth movers that help the brigade suppress the insurgency here.



Sergeant Carlos M. Romero, a mechanic with 2/28 Brigade Combat Team hammers down the edges of a steel beam while fabricating armor for a troop transport vehicle here. The Orlando, FL native, was activated from reserve status for Operation Iraqi Freedom and uses skills learned from his civilian job to craft the various components needed to outfit the brigade.
Photo by Sgt. Ryan S. Scranton

Coleman and his maintenance team composed of Chief Warrant Officer James Snook of Harrisburg, PA and 1st Sgt. Francis Fournay of Pine Grove, PA, work to provide the Brigade with combat readiness and vehicles that provide protection for the crews. "Our motto is, we need to be fixed to fight".

"We make sure that the Brigade's combat power is at it's fullest; which we have done pretty consistently for the last few months," Coleman said. "We're operating at or around ninety to ninety-two percent operational ready."

The previous four months of operations in this urban Iraqi town have proven arduous for 2BCT, but even before their

arrival in late July, the Soldiers faced more than just the insurgency. Prior to their mobilization when Coleman and the rest of the brigade were training at Camp Shelby, Miss. they were also preparing their numerous and often outdated vehicles for combat here. The thousands of Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, and Marines that comprise the 2/28 BCT would require thousands of vehicles to conduct operations in this sprawling Iraqi City. Knowing they would be facing an enemy that has employed both small arms, and more frequently vehicle-borne and roadside Improvised Explosive Devices, required the brigade to modify its inventory of vehicles with protective armor to keep its troops safe. Thousands of vehicles needed modifications and additional armor to safeguard them from enemy attacks.

"When we got the order to mobilize they told us to bring everything and we did," Coleman said. "Many of our vehicles were refurbished in Mississippi. Others were hauled down and driven straight on to the ships just before we left."

When Coleman and his fellow Soldiers arrived in Kuwait, the main hub for all U.S. service members' arrival before moving into Iraq, they again began work to refit the remaining vehicles that were not outfitted in Mississippi. They found a pre-established armoring facility in Kuwait, affectionately known as "Big Bob's Armor Shop" where the up-armoring process continued.

Upon their arrival to Ar Ramadi, Coleman and his team discovered hundreds of still un-armored vehicles left by the brigade which was replaced by the 2/28BCT. With no technicians specifically trained in armoring vehicles, Coleman pulled from within his own corps of mechanics comprised of National Guardsmen from over 30 different states. The more than 4,000 Soldiers brought to Iraq both their military knowledge as well as a broad spectrum of civilian experience. Coleman brainstormed and decided to capitalize on their expertise calling upon his section leaders to compile a list of their best welders, mechanics, and steel workers.

"I was surprised when I got the lists back because there were so many peo-



The "Dream TEAM" (left to right) 1st Sgt. Francis Fournay, First Lieutenant Jeremy M. Coleman and Chief Warrant Officer James Snook. Have orchestrated a maintenance plan to keep the 2/28 BCT fleet of combat vehicles at around ninety to ninety two percent operational ready.
Photo By Spc. Hope Detweiler

ple, but we narrowed it down to about a list of twenty," Coleman said. "Some of the guys were farmers who worked on tractors, others were welders in the civilian sector. The skill sets we have been able to pull from within the National Guard have been incredible."

The Soldiers were quickly organized and put to work. Hundred of sheets of



(left to right) "Frankenstein" and the "Terminator", names given to the newly up-armored Prime movers of the 2/28BCT. These vehicles were completed in Kuwait prior to rolling north into Iraq and represent a small portion of the hundreds of combat vehicles, transport trucks, and earth movers that help the brigade suppress the insurgency in the AL Anbar Province of Iraq.
Photo by 1st Sgt. Francis Fournay

reinforced steel were cut, formed, and welded in place. The brigade mechanics fabricated steel boxes to be placed around troop carrying vehicles. Entire floors of vehicles were replaced to protect drivers and passengers from the upward blast of roadside bombs. In many instances entire vehicle cabs were removed and new armor plated

(Continued on page 17)



FROM THE BRIGADE SERGEANT MAJOR



Command Sgt. Maj.
Horace C. Pysher

For the past eleven months, the 2/28 Brigade Combat Team has been busy preparing, training, deploying, and fighting to accomplish our mission in Iraq. I want to thank each of you for your hard work and dedication to making this the success that it has been to date.

Our mission has been so successful because of the outstanding performance of each of you in your respective jobs within the BCT. We appreciate the tremendous effort of all of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines as well as the contractors who support us each day.

I especially want to thank the DFAC staff for the outstanding Thanksgiving Day meal. I am sure that many of you were as surprised as I was at the time and attention they invested in preparing such excellent meals and decorating the dining facility. I can't wait to see what they will provide for us at Christmas. Please take a minute to thank each of them for a job well done.

As we prepare for the Christmas holiday let each of us remain focused on the mission at hand and in taking care of each other. Let us continue our effort to be offensive in spirit, vigilant in ensuring the safety of each Soldier, and steadfast in our purpose to be the best at what we do each day. Thanks again for your service and thanks to your families for their outstanding support.

"Iron Soldiers"

"We Miss You Over The Holidays This Year"

By - Chaplain (LTC) Charles M. Purinton, Jr. 1-172
Armor Battalion, Task Force

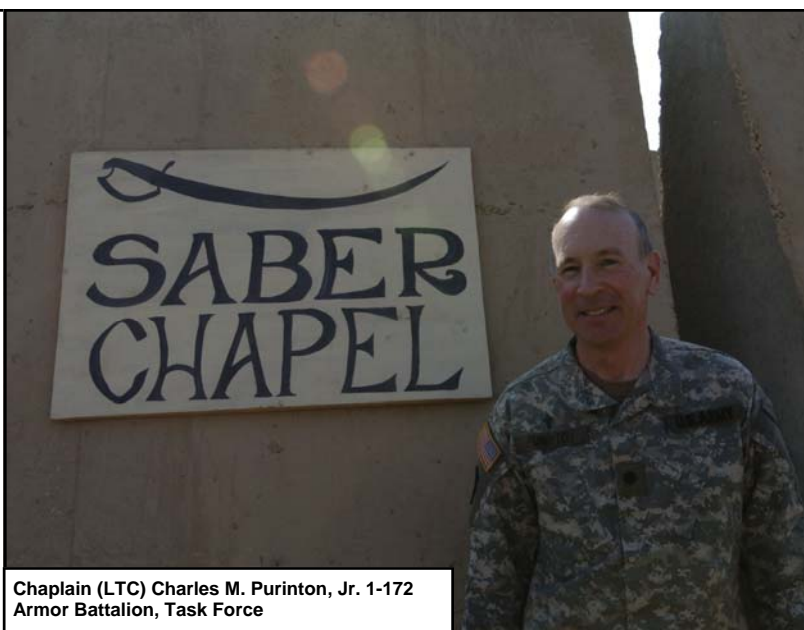
Dear Families,

My duty as a Chaplain extends around the world by spiritual power, through prayer to you, through presence with our soldiers. Our separation means different holidays this year. We will still share the family traditions with the same love, you in a home, and us in temporary lodging. Nothing seems the same, yet as we grow in different places we are the same people getting better at understanding, accepting, and loving.

We continue traditions here. Our Chapels will offer worship services for the variable duty shifts. Decorations and lights will color the buildings and barracks. This is a time to celebrate what is most meaningful, the unchanging spiritual power of love. We will sing carols around our neighborhoods here, both day and night. We express in song the stories and melodies of timeless human hope, new birth of life and years, and the people and places we treasure in our hearts.

Holidays are "holy days" for memories to build our hope. Whatever our holy place may be, let us make this time another memory we can affirm as positive and creative. My wife says to our church, "One of the most powerful realizations of this experience has been to discover new inner resources to deal with life as it is at the present time. Many days I have to remind myself, this is what it is, and I need to find resources to adapt, cope, process. There is much that is good." For good, we resist, send away, or let go of what is not helpful, what is not the right direction, what holds us back from who we need to be this year. For good, we continue the traditional activities in new ways.

Soldiers mention the different challenges of these holidays depending on their kind of family. Every family has its own particular rituals reserved for holidays. Even now, though the family may be personal, it is not private, for we share the same experience of deployment and war. We are each in our communities, sharing these holidays. No one is alone in this experience because the gifts of human love triumph wherever we are.



Chaplain (LTC) Charles M. Purinton, Jr. 1-172
Armor Battalion, Task Force

The Iron Soldier is a publication of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division (M). It is produced by the Public Affairs Office of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team

Public Affairs Office

Brigade PAO
2/28TH BCT - Camp Ar-Ramadi
APO, AE 09362-9997

Brigade Commander

Col. John L. Gronski

Deputy Commander

Col. Regis A. Cardiff

Brigade Command Sgt. Major

CSM Horace C. Pysher

Executive Officer

Lt. Col. Christopher T. Yeakle

Public Affairs Officer

Capt. Alfred A. Smith
alfred.a.smith@us.army.mil

Public Affairs Team

Sgt. 1st Class Richard Scariaciotoli
richard.scariaciotoli@us.army.mil
Spc. Samantha Kerschner

Public Affairs Representatives

HHC 2/28 BCT

Maj. Trish Price
1st Lt. Rose Forrest
Spc. Kimberly Calvert

876th Engineers Battalion

Maj. Chuck Kim
1st Lt. Monica Luongo
Master Sgt. Michael Henry

HHC 876th Engineers

Staff Sgt. Dominic Mazza
Sgt. Michael Dubovecky

135th Engineers

Sgt. Robert Foreman

861st Engineers

1st Lt. Russell Degraw
Sgt. 1st Class Robert Cribari

228th Forward Support Battalion

Capt. Jason Guerrettaz
Staff Sgt. Marcie Ficht
Sgt. Michelle Lynn
Spc. Aaron Berger
Spc. Kroll

222nd Field Artillery

Maj. Sterling Mc Murrin

104th U.S. Cavalry

Sgt. 1st Class Ben Gomez

231st Military Intelligence

1st Lt. Chris Lew

A Co. 138th Signal Battalion

2nd Lt. Erick McCorkle
Sgt. Matt Wright
Spc. Chris Greuter

1/109th Infantry & A Co. 3/103rd Armor

Capt. Patrick R. Monahan

1/110th Infantry & C Co. 1/103rd Armor

1st Lt. Antonia Greene
1st Lt. David Catherman
2nd Lt. Sean Bufano

1/172nd Armor

Sgt. 1st Class Michael S. Currier

1/167 U.S. Cavalry

1st Lt. Jacques Smith
1st Lt. James Belprez

2/69 Armor

Capt. Charles Cannon

Take a Survey for The Philadelphia Inquirer

Sandy Bauers, a reporter for The Philadelphia Inquirer needs your help to gather information for a story that she is currently working on.

In Sandy Bauers' own words:

The story is about whether there's a difference between today's nearly instant e-mails and the two-weeks-to-deliver snail mail.

Does the different format change what people say? Are they more forthcoming or less?

Is the wife reluctant to say the roof is leaking because she knows the husband will worry or try to leap in and help? If he does, will that distract him from his mission?

Or is the opposite true? Does the Soldier in Iraq treasure that close link with the family back home? Does it make for a happier, more committed Soldier? Does, say, daily e-mail contact ease the minds of the folks back home?

I'm sure there are a lot of different answers for different people, but that's what I'd like to explore.

To respond to this survey, please contact Sandy Bauers at the following e-mail address:

sbauers@phillynews.com

Or you can snail mail her at:

Sandy Bauers, Reporter
The Philadelphia Inquirer
120 N. High Street
West Chester, PA 19380
Phone: 610-701-7635

Have a story or picture for the Iron Soldiers?



Contributions from all Soldiers throughout the 2nd Brigade Combat Team are encouraged for consideration. Please enclose a detailed description of the people (name, rank and unit) and subject matter for each story and photo. Include your name, unit and contact information.

Contact your unit Public Affairs Rep located on the left side of this page or send an email to richard.scariaciotoli@us.army.mil

READY

Continued from page 15

cabs were put in their place. The operation was labor intensive, but Coleman's crews quickly grew accustomed to the work and soon were functioning with assembly line precision.

"When we first got here we barely knew what up-armor was," Coleman said. "Now we're experts. These guys can tell you how much weight is added with each improvement and how much power reduction is caused to the engine by each added piece of steel. They've gotten really good at what they do."

"The improvements have proved vital to the brigade reducing combat casualties exponentially," Coleman said, and he has seen first hand the effectiveness of the improvements.

"I can't begin to tell you how many lives have been saved by the armor we put on these vehicles," Coleman said. "I have had guys come back from an attack standing right in front of me telling me that their vehicle was destroyed, but everyone inside the vehicle was okay. It's amazing."



In Memory Of
2nd Lieutenant Mark Procopio
Alpha Company, 1st Battalion - 172nd Armor



In Memory Of
Specialist Timothy Brown
Bravo Company, 1st Battalion - 125th Infantry



In Memory Of
Staff Sgt. Michael Parrott
Charlie Company, 1st Battalion - 103rd Armor



In Memory Of
Sergeant Joshua Ferando
Headquarters Co., 1st Battalion - 110th Infantry



In Memory Of
Specialist John Dearing
Bravo Company, 1st Battalion - 125th Infantry

REST IN PEACE, WARRIORS

